

# HISTORY OF UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF BALTIMORE

THE UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF BALTIMORE  
and  
THE MINISTERS WHO MADE HER FAMOUS

THE Union Baptist Church of Baltimore was organized May 10th, 1852 on Lewis Street between Orleans and Mullikin Sts. in East Baltimore, Md. That it took this name from the beginning, there can be no doubt, other claims notwithstanding. It reported the following October to the Maryland Baptist Union Association with this name. The pseudonym, "Lewis Street Baptist Church" only distinguished its location, as did "North Street" later.

The congregation was established with fifty-seven members, about thirty of whom came along with the Rev. John Carey, its founder, from the First Baptist Church, and others, who came presumably, from an obscure mission then existing in the vicinity of the Bel Air Market.

It will be recalled that the First Baptist Church had built an edifice in 1841 under its founder, the Rev. Moses Clayton, father of the denomination here. This church called the Rev. John Carey in 1849 and the records show that during the two years of his ministry there the church ran into financial difficulties. The building was sold to pay its debts in January 1852 and the Rev. Carey resigned almost immediately. As most of the early officers of Union were formerly officers of the First Church, there can be little doubt that these officers came along with Rev. Carey to form The Union.

The church now undertook to buy this edifice from the purchaser, one Benjamin Brown, recorded on the deed as a "free Negro." Brown had been a former officer of the First Church. The purchase price as recorded was two hundred forty-nine dollars and fifty cents.

The year after its organization the report to the Union Association speaks of "marked progress" and proudly points out that one-half of its purchase price had been paid as well as the Ground Rent of fifty dollars. The membership was then given as 58 and the money sent up to the Association was \$1.50.

One Samuel Hackett, the first clerk, and the Rev. John Carey were the credited representatives at the session.

The report for 1854 recites that the building had been paid for. The latter part of this year or early the next. The Rev. Carey resigned.

Both its Deed and Charter were secured in 1855.

The document which incorporates Union into a church is an interesting paper. It attempts to declare the general principles of the Baptist Church; outlines the duties of the pastor, deacons and trustees; limits the voting powers to the "males of the age of twenty-one and above" and refers to the pastor as "BISHOP." This declaration is followed by a certificate which recites:

"We, the undersigned, do hereby certify that this Constitution was adopted by the members of the Lewis Street Baptist Church, in Baltimore City, at the organization of the Church and that we, the subscribers were duly elected trustees and pastor of the said church, Wit-

ness our hands this 10th day of May, 1852."

This certificate was signed by John Carey as pastor and Thomas R. Reams, John Ashton, John Madden, Benjamin Brown and Thomas Jones. Of these, Thomas Jones and Thomas Reams made their marks.

Thomas Reams, one of the signers of the incorporation papers, and one Brother Charles Smith represented the church in the Union Association and reported "no pastor and 43 members."

In April 1856, the church called as pastor the late Rev. Chancey Leonard, reputed to have been a gentleman of very high Christian character. The congregation was much improved in morale, and peace and harmony ruled during his stay of two years. The membership now went back to its starting point of 57. Rev. Leonard resigned in 1858 and the Rev. Mr. Isaac Kendall was called the latter part of this year, but very promptly declined the call when he found that the church was too poor to pay a salary.

In 1859-60 the church had no pastor, but in a measure maintained regular worship. Strange to say the membership increased to 65 without such a leader and so it was in 1861, at about the outbreak of the Civil War when the church called to her aid the services of Rev. William Williams.

## UPWARD TREND

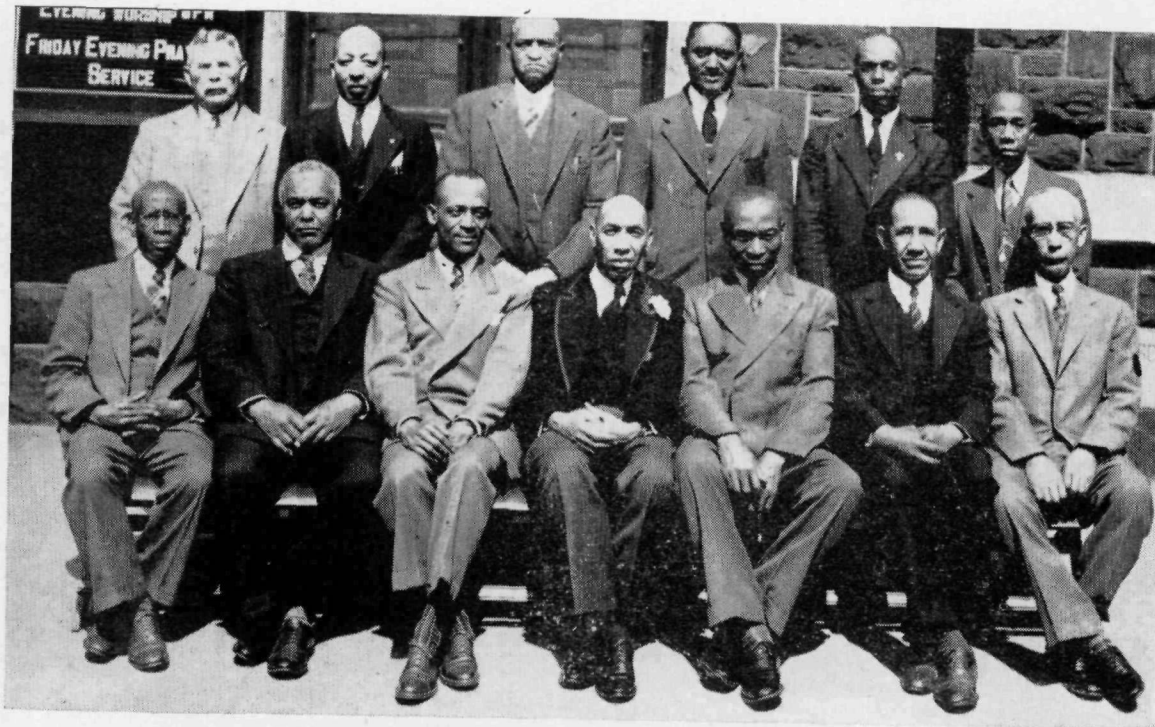
With the coming of Rev. Williams the first real step in Union's history begins. In spite of those terrible and trying days of the Civil War, the Rev. Mr. Williams successfully carried on. At times his membership trailed below the mark, but seemingly he never grew tired or discouraged. As he reported, the "troubles of the country have greatly affected the church," yet, he gives the cheerful remark, the "house is sometimes crowded." By the close of the war the church was able to report a "very prosperous year" with a membership of 124. This same year the Sunday School began to show some added life with three teachers and 20 scholars and a total collection for the year of \$4.16 and 50 volumes in the library.

When one reads the minutes of the other churches (white) during this terrible war period, he can appreciate by comparison, the magnitude of this effort.

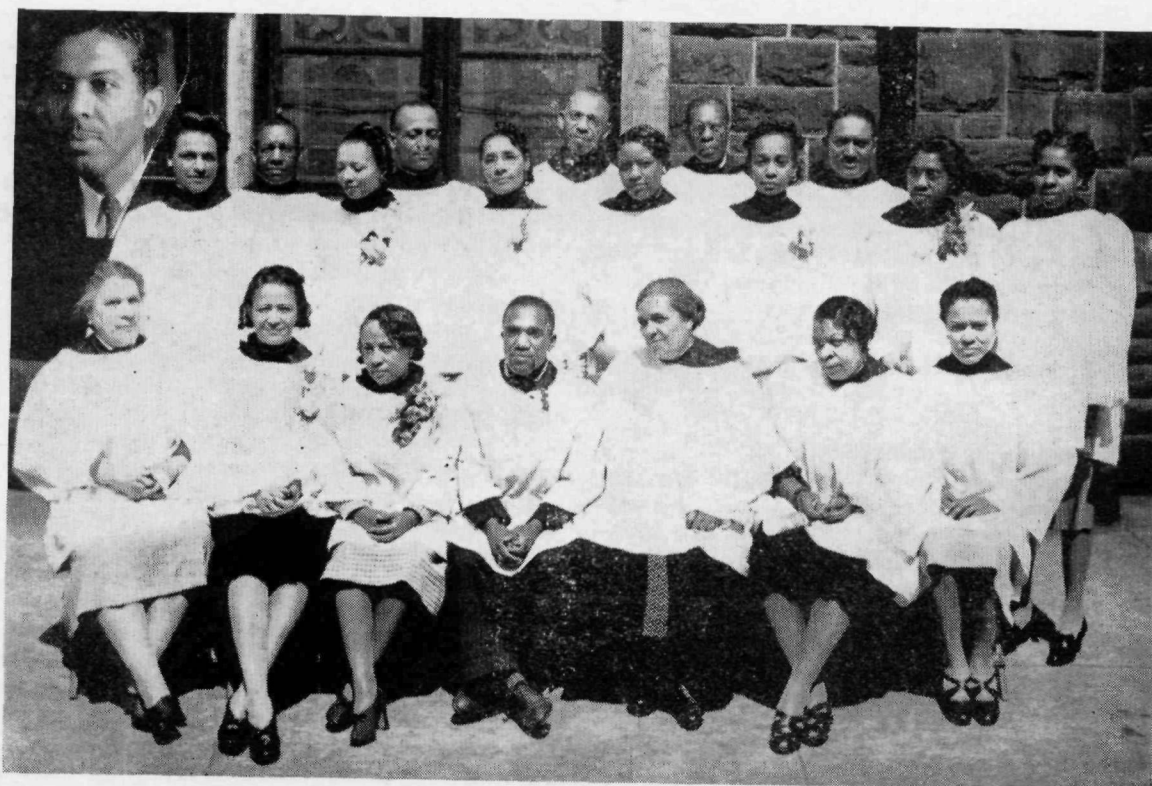
In 1846, we note, in passing, that Brother Lewis Hicks, later a pastor of the First Church and an important figure in church life of the State, was one of Union's delegates to the Union Association.

It will be recalled that in 1866 the Saratoga Street venture (the second colored Baptist Church to be established), came to an end with the church disbanding. The majority of these faithful workers joined Union and brought untold strength to this struggling congregation. In her later history the names of several of her most prominent members are those who came to Union at this time—men, who had touched and been influenced by that fine and noble old character, Rev. Noah Davis, who had fathered that band of pioneers. These include the Madden brothers, Deacon West; the Weavers, including the illustrious Brother Benjamin Weaver; the Blackwells and W. P. Thompson, who later became pastor of the church.

Mr. Weaver had been elected in 1859, superintendent



THE PASTOR AND BOARD OF DEACONS



OUR GREAT SENIOR CHOIR  
Inset — Prof Houston R. Jackson, Choir Master

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## History Continued

of the Saratoga Street Sunday School and upon his coming to Union, was immediately placed in charge. For about forty years thereafter he piloted this auxiliary.

The church in 1867 reported "a very prosperous year" with Rev. William Williams and W. P. Thompson as official representatives. The newcomers had brought new life and energy to the Union. Her services were now over-crowded, the church therefore took thought of securing larger quarters. The Maryland Union Association through its Extension Society and the help of such good white men as the late Rev. Franklin Wilson, Christopher West, Hiram Woods, Henry Taylor and others, finally agreed to help finance the buying of the Old Disciples' Meeting House on North Street (now Guilford Avenue.) The church moved to this site in 1868.

This move however, met with considerable opposition and a lawsuit followed by those who tenaciously held on to the old Lewis Street site. The Union won eventually and the twenty-six members who had been excluded were restored.

In all, the Rev. Mr. Williams served Union for about eight years; anxious and long years during those turbulent days of the Civil War; years of toil and real sacrifice. At the close of his great work Union could boast of 210 members, a very fine meeting house to worship in; a flourishing little Sunday School of nine officers and 67 members and 230 volumes in her "library." The Sunday School's collections for the year amounted to \$38.32. Peace and harmony prevailed and a new viewpoint and hope had seized the Baptist heart.

In the autumn after the death of Rev. Williams, the church ordained William P. Thompson and called him immediately to carry on the work he had manifested so much interest in and knew so much about. He was a native of Baltimore, a very young man and gave promise of a great future.

For his first year's effort he counted nine conversions and by the next year was able to report 47 as having been added by baptism to the roster of members. Moreover, the entire indebtedness on the building had been paid, two members were out studying for the ministry and there was a total membership of two hundred sixty-seven.

But alas! This usefulness was to be short lived, for early in January 1872, death claimed him as an untimely victim.

From February until October the church was again without a minister. Under the guidance of such faithful laymen as French Madden, William C. Lawson, Royston Blackwell and Henry P. Waters, she continued her activities, the collecting of funds for the buying of the ground about her building. During this period and through the thoughtfulness of the late Reverend Dr. G. M. P. King, then president of Wayland Seminary, the was amply pulpit supplied by students and former graduates of this famous old institution. It was during an engagement of this sort that the church discovered in the young graduate Harvey Johnson the type of leadership it deserved and called him in late October of this year as its leader.

As glorious as had been Union's history up to this date, her real program of usefulness begins from this memorable date. Not only of Union, as that matters, for as Dr. George F. Bragg, Jr., has wisely opined, it is from this date that the history of the Maryland Negro Baptists begins.

### THE HARVEY JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

It was in October 1872 that the young Rev. Harvey Johnson took charge of the Union Baptist Church. Although the Baptist cause had been planted within our group in Maryland at least thirty-six years, the number of Colored Baptists within the State numbered less than five hundred. In the brief space of time between Rev. Thompson's death (January) and the calling of Dr. Harvey Johnson (October) the little church, now thoroughly alive with enthusiasm, "carried on" in the collecting of funds for the new building and so with a new pastor, the church became a bee-hive in activities.

Rev. Johnson was a forceful and convincing leader and also a great gospel preacher. Soon the people turned out "en masse" to hear him and very quickly indeed the results showed in the church register of members. Within the first two years the church membership was over the five-hundred mark, nor was it growing in membership alone. Soon after his coming Rev. Johnson thought to make the church self-respecting and independent, by making it self-supporting. He accordingly, refused all aid from the Union Association and called upon the church to bear its own burdens. By 1874 the building had been outgrown and all plans made for a new one. The next year the membership was nine hundred and twenty, the old building had been torn away, and another was being built. The minuted inform that "two are studying for the ministry and we have a missionary who has aided in organizing two churches in Carroll and Frederick Counties."

On January 23, 1876, the new church building was formally dedicated. The entire structure had cost over \$20,000, an enormous sum in those days.

And so Union grew by leaps and bounds. By 1877 her register showed 1,368 members and an additional hundred the next year. A program of expansion had been inaugurated and four mission Sunday Schools were established in the city; four men were studying for the ministry and a mission had been planted at Westminster, Maryland.

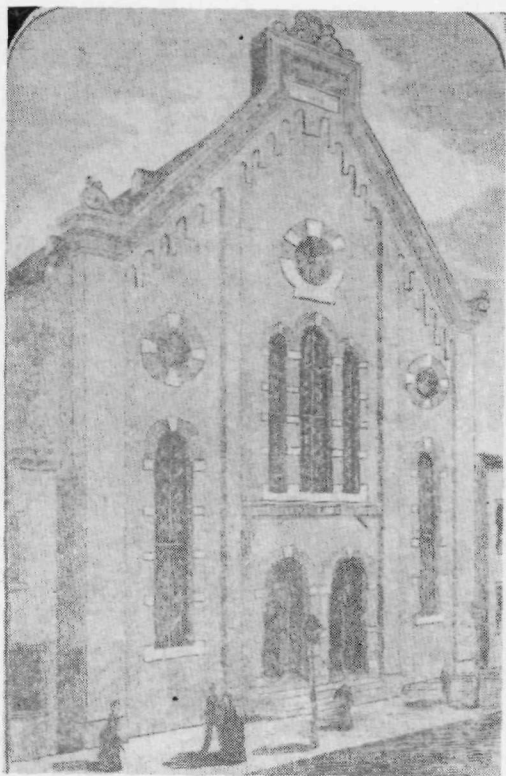
In the meantime (September 29 1874) 16 members had been granted letters and the Macedonia Church been established. In 1879 twenty-seven members were set apart as the Perkins Square Baptist Church.

Going back to her other records, by 1879 all indebtedness had been wiped out and the report the following year gave the number studying for the ministry as six.

The roll steadily increased and by 1885 had crossed the 2,000 marks, nor did it stop until in 1912 it reached its peak with a membership of 3,028.

I might go on indefinitely, but shall have to content myself in generalities by saying that Union is reasonably regarded as the fountainhead of missions of our denomination.

In the little table found elsewhere I have attempted



THE NORTH STREET EDIFICE.



OUR PRESENT TRUSTEE BOARD



OTHER MAKERS OF HISTORY

1-4, Ordained from Union: Revs. Walker, Dennis, Alexander, Watson;  
5, S. S. Booker, a former S. S. Supt.; 6, Deacon Brabham, Custodian;  
7, Attorney L. G. Koger, Pres. Brotherhood; 8, Dr. F. M. Wood,  
S. S. Supt. Emeritus; 9, Fenton Mallory, S. S. Teacher, 14 years with-  
out absence; 10, L. H. Davenport, Trustee and oldest member; 11,  
Wm. A. Chatmon, our Clerk; 12, A. B. Koger, S. S. Supt., author of  
this work, etc. 13, Mrs. Veola Coleman; 14, J. P. Evans (Deceased).  
15, Dr. H. Johnson (1872).

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## History Continued

to list some of the churches established by the Union during this administration as well as a number of ministers ordained. This cold list, by no means can tell of the Struggle, assistance, hard fought problems overcome and of the time and attention as well as organization required to accomplish these ends. Nor does the list include those student-ministers who made special appeals to Union for aid and were always remembered. This spirit has been manifest in other administrations. Under Dr. Over two young ministers were assisted, viz. the Rev. Bradshaw and D. A. Scott. In the Boddie administration our own Hyason Diggs, received substantial aid.

Nor has this aid been extended to ministers alone, as evidenced by the fact that a set of books was given to the first colored lawyer admitted to practice in Baltimore.

Among the mission Sunday Schools, teachers and literature were often supplied, while in the case of the mission at Westminster, Md. an edifice at a cost of \$850.00 was erected by the Union.

Historians of the future will have to chronicle more in detail these and other undertakings of this great institution and the great leaders who made it famous. Well might Dr. George F. Bragg, Jr., in his "Men of Maryland" declare that it was Dr. Harvey Johnson who put the Baptists of Maryland on the ecclesiastical map. Suffice it to say, that Union's influence has been felt throughout the nation and her offspring of ministers have held charges from Massachusetts to Texas. Her laymen are legion and their influence inestimable. I venture to say in practically every church within the city, may be found laymen, who can, and in most cases, do with pride, point out, that they received inspiration, growth and training from the Union.

When The Union had worshipped at the old North Street site for about twenty-eight years, the farsighted leader saw that the time had come for a change. To follow the trend of the shift in Negro population to the Northwest section, was the desire of its membership. The trustees were therefore advised to locate a site there. After considerable effort, lots were secured on Druid Hill Avenue above Dolphin Street (the present site). In course of time the building was started.

In the meantime the old North Street meeting house was sold and services were conducted in the Nazarite Hall. The last Sunday of worship at North Street was the first Sunday in May, 1904.

The new edifice was dedicated December 17, 1905. It had cost \$51,256. The ground purchased in 1921, cost an additional \$6,500.00. The building is of stone and has poured stained-glass windows. It has a lecture-Sunday School department on the ground floor, as well as toilet, kitchen and offices, one or two store-rooms and a small library storage room. On the second floor the main auditorium will seat about eight hundred; there also is the pastor's study, the officers room, the choir's room, and Finance room. Her pipe organ was built back and overhead of the pulpit rostrum. The walls are fresco and the wood done in Mahogany.

In a work of this length I cannot point out the work-

ings of this master mind and of this interested and working congregation during the golden years that followed. Pick up here and there throughout this story, the little threads of its workings in missions and education and in other lines and weave them together into the beautiful fabric of usefulness.

Enfeebled now and literally worn out in service, Dr. Johnson merely held on in the early twenties. In November 1922 the church celebrated Dr. Johnson's half century anniversary. Men from every walk of life did him honor. He died the following January.

As long as was this ministry however, no panic came to Union. Dr. Johnson had planned that and the set of officers he had trained took the reins and carried on pending the search for a leader.

During these two years all outstanding debts were paid and the entire church overhauled and painted.

### DR. OVER SERVES

In November 1924, almost two years after Dr. Johnson's death, the Rev. Dr. David E. Over, a former pastor of the Zion Baptist Church at Denver, Colo. came to Union as its minister. He was elderly and of the older school of thought.

Following, however, as he did a minister of the type and training of Dr. Johnson, it is neither strange, nor unusual that his task was a difficult one. During those last years of Dr. Johnson's administration, much of the younger life had left the church; the program was antiquated and unsuited and much tension felt. The strain and effects of the influx from the south, during and following the World War, were also being felt in Union as well as in many of the other churches of the city.

With Dr. Over's coming with his matchless technique as a noted pulpiteer, the church immediately took on new life and activity. Her pews were crowded on Sundays and her coffers bulged with the offerings of a people willing to undertake another great program.

During the brief tenure of office, nearly fifty thousand dollars were collected; a parsonage costing \$9,500 was purchased and furnished also, a suitable tombstone was erected to the memory of Dr. Johnson. The entire church was responsive and yielding. A program of expansion was advocated next, by the pastor. Unfortunately, one of the principle parts of this program of expansion, was the moving of the congregation to another site. Opposition arose immediately. The congregation regarded this church building as a shrine to their late leader and to talk of leaving it was sacrilege. Dr. Over insisted however, and the church reluctantly, but promptly severed its ties with him. (March 8, 1928).

Dr. Over organized, with a block of 187 prominent and active members who stuck to him, the Providence Baptist Church. Some few of this number later returned to the church however. Union was later successful in a lawsuit which grew out of this transaction.

Upon Dr. Over's leaving the church was again put in the hands of a Pulpit Committee which sought a leader for the congregation.



THE JUNIOR CHOIR — OUR PRIDE



OTHER MAKERS OF HISTORY  
Right—Rev. Edw. Brown, ordained at Union

## History Continued

### THE BODDIE ADMINISTRATION

In May 1929 the Church called as its leader the Rev. J. Timothy Boddie, son of the late Rev. J. B. Boddie, noted evangelist. Though young for such responsibilities, Rev. Boddie guided Union through the early day of the depression, with great tact and skill.

He accepted the church's policy of pay-as-you-go-during-these-hard-times and emerged ten years later with an enviable record and a host of wellwishers and friends.

The material gains are not a fair test of this administration. The peace that Rev. Boddie lead the charge into; the fine spiritual and friendly attitude amount to more perhaps, than material gains. During the early part of the depression the Church fed several thousand persons while the government adjusted and formulated a policy of handling these. Later the administration repaired the windows, caulked her sides etc. repainted her entire interior and brought the choir down from the loft at the back, into a choir stand on the pulpit's level. The organ was also rebuilt.

The Rev. Boddie resigned in October 1939 and in March 1940 the Rev. Dr. Baxter L. Matthews assumed the leadership.

### OUR PRESENT EFFORTS

Newer life is being manifested in Union with the coming of the present minister. His services are attended well and his program is being accepted and responded to. Already he has made certain repairs to the windows and doors and fresh paints have been added to the parsonage and parts of the church proper.

That a long looked for dream of many of her members may at long last be realized is indicated by his desire for a community program. The property next door,—a three story dwelling—has been purchased and already plans are being made for renovation and this spring will no doubt usher in a small, but strong, Parish House effort.

That others are interested in the new order may be manifest in the number of workers undertaking new activities. Among the new organizations recently formed are, the Union Baptist Brotherhood with approximately one hundred members, a Youth's Guild and a Troup of Boy Scouts.

The Union of today is organized with a view towards having all members interested and working, in some auxiliary of the church. The adult membership proper is therefore assigned into groups called Circles, each with a leader or president. Besides these we have a Youth's Guild for the younger ladies and men of the Church where it is hoped they may find usefulness. The very young are assigned to a Junior Church Group, where special emphasis is placed on church membership training. We have a Boys' Scout Troop and look forward to having very soon, a Girls' Scout Troop. Of course, there is the usual Deacon and Trustee Boards, a Financial Board, Ladies' Usher Board, a Men's Usher Board, a Junior Men's Usher Board, a Senior Choir, a Junior Choir, a Gospel Chorus, the Church School, a Baptist Training Union, a Missionary Society and a Union Baptist Brotherhood.

In these it is expected that every member will find

outlet for his feelings, talents and usefulness. With the opening of our Parish House next door, these several organizations will find a fuller growth and development.

Elsewhere in this booklet, are listed the heads of these present-day organizations.

The Union's Sunday School must of necessity come in for a few words of special consideration. Older, by a few days, than the Church itself, it was organized April 22, 1852.

During its life it has enjoyed an enviable record. Fortunate in having had many able men and women enrolled in her ranks of workers, I list the late Benjamin Weaver, who for about forty years as superintendent, helped to shape her history. Mr. S. S. Booker, prominent Y. M. C. A. Executive Secretary here in the city was superintendent and a teacher of a Men's Bible Class for a number of years; T. Alexander Date, Mrs. Iantha Mallory, Mrs. Martha Clark and many others too numerous to mention, gave of their time and talents to make her the envy and pride of the denomination. Dr. Francis M. Wood, Superintendent Emeritus, had an unusually successful administration, attracting to it many of the school teachers of the city. The late Walter J. Thornton served in office for over fifty years and made valuable contributions.

The present School is not the biggest in the city, but is one of the best. Enthusiasm and thoroughness are to be found and a fine fellowship is in evidence. A faculty of thirty-six is divided into five departments with superintendents over each. A ten-piece orchestra, under the leadership of a professional musician, gives color to the music and singing to be found at scarcely any other place. I am proud to say that the school faculty has attracted seventeen public school teachers of the city, who disprove the general idea that professional people have forsaken the church work. Our new teachers take a two year's Teacher Training Course and among the Orchestra, teacher trainees and general staff, are to be found graduates and students of both the Morsan State and Coppin's Teachers Colleges.

Outlook for the future at The Union is very bright. With an experienced and well trained pastor at its head and with the several auxiliaries manned, in most cases with able, active and intelligent leaders, with the various Boards working in harmony with their leaders, and with the great spirit of fellowship and peace now prevailing, there is no reason why the Union of the future should not partake of the glory and grandeur of the past.

Union's program is heading towards the Institutional Church and someday, God willing, I predict, that The Union Baptist Church of Baltimore will move onward and upward to undimmed glory, making other enviable records in the annals of Baptist Church History.

Though primarily this story is a record of the ministers who gave to The Union her glorious history, it goes without saying that these accomplishments could not have been realized without the loyal and unstinted support of many, many faithful laymen. The Union has been fortunate in having an unusual share of stalwart men and women who have performed great services. In this line have been several who have given long and

(Continued on Page Eleven)



THE UNION ORCHESTRA—(Mr. Jas. Young, Conductor)



#### COMMUNITY HOUSE

Property Acquired Recently Under the Present Pastor, to be Developed as a Parish House and Named, "The Harvey Johnson Memorial Center" in Honor of Dr. Johnson.



#### THE PARSONAGE

(Acquired under Dr. Over)

## History Continued

useful service and while it remains dangerous to point out some above others, I take the liberty of doing this very thing.

Lewis Minor for thirty-one years clerk of the church, has done the unusual in having preserved a fine and detailed account of the affairs at Union during her golden years.

Thacker Washington as Custodian of property for about this same period of time was quite a factor along this line.

Deacons H. P. Waters, S. P. Biggs, Benjamin Hamilton, R. Mattell, Columbus Gordon and Edward H. Fisher, as supporters and defenders of the Rev. Harvey Johnson's many, many fights and undertakings, merit the everlasting thanks of our entire denomination. They served as officers in many ways.

Benjamin Weaver was superintendent of the Saratoga St. Church School in 1859 and on coming to The Union in 1866 was immediately elected to this important office and served until his death in 1905.

Herbert Y. Johnson was an organist for about 50 years.

Joseph P. Evans too, was a faithful servant for Union for a long period of time and in the crisis in 1923. gave valuable services.

Walter J. Thornton for about fifty-three years was an officer in the Sunday School and organized the Sunday School Department of the Colored Baptist Convention.

George M. Lane, attorney, was an officer and gave valuable services back in his day and time. Others might be mentioned but these illustrate the many types of services that our laymen have given. Our oldest member Trustee, Louis H. Davenport has been an officer for over forty years.

Among others who have served long and well are:

### AMONG THE DEACONS:

|                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| George West (1852)     | Harris Moore (1874) |
| Benjamin Weaver (1866) | Lewis Minor (1879)  |
| R. Blackwell (1866)    | Thos. Porter (1879) |
| Moses Campbell (1861)  | T. Alexander Date   |
| H. P. Waters (1868)    | Charles Fallin      |
| Spicer Neal            | John Westcott       |
| Josiah Walker          | H. H. Lewis (1884)  |
| P. Patterson (1867)    | R. T. Hunter        |
| James Roberson (1884)  | Edw. H. Fisher      |
| Jas. H. Johnson        | B. B. Lewis         |
| Wm. Johnson            | William Kimball     |

### SOME CHURCH CHORISTERS:

|                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| James Green     | Eugene Bell     |
| A. J. Reid      | Elizabeth Welch |
| Wm. Glover      | James Young     |
| Elijah Winston  | Ruby Blackwell  |
| Mamie T. Rustin |                 |

### SOME OF THE CHURCH CLERKS

|               |                     |
|---------------|---------------------|
| Wm. C. Lawson | Dr. A. O. Reid      |
| Lewis Minor   | Charles Fallin      |
| Louis Hargett | Dr. Joseph B. Mason |

### SOME PAST CUSTODIANS:

|                    |                      |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| Thacker Washington | James Thomas         |
| Royston Blackwell  | William B. Blackwell |

### SOME PAST TREASURERS:

|               |                   |
|---------------|-------------------|
| Zebedee Job   | Deaver Smith      |
| E. H. Fisher  | T. Alexander Date |
| Robert Hunter |                   |

### SOME PAST SUPERINTENDENTS:

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Benjamin Weaver    | S. S. Booker      |
| Floyd C. Lewis     | Benjamin P. Dixon |
| Walter J. Thornton | Francis M. Wood   |

### INSPIRED TO FOREIGN MISSIONARY FIELDS:

|            |                          |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Miss ..... | Miss Susan Harris, R. N. |
| Mrs. ———   | Bandeje                  |

### SOME OF CHURCHES ESTABLISHED FROM UNION:

|                   |              |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Macedonia         | Johnsonville |
| Calvary (Extinct) | Winfield     |
| Perkins Square    | Towson       |
| Mt. Washington    | Westminister |
| Catonsville       | Canton       |
| Elkridge          | Govans       |
| Trinity           | Providence   |
| Frederick         |              |

### SOME OF MINISTERS ORDAINED AT UNION

|                      |                   |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| Rev. W. P. Thompson  | P. C. Neal        |
| T. Clements          | Garner R. Waller  |
| J. A. Dennis         | A. B. Callis      |
| T. A. Anderson       |                   |
| C. H. Jones          | Rev. S. J. Winder |
| Robert McGuinn       | J. E. Watson      |
| Rev. W. M. Alexander | Edward A. Brown   |
| William Credit       | Hyason Diggs      |
| T. H. Holmes         |                   |

### READY INFORMATION UNION BAPTIST CHURCH, BALTIMORE, MD.

Druid Hill Avenue above Dolphin Street

Telephone: Lafayette 4522

PARSONAGE: 340 Dolphin Street  
Telephone: Madison 8533

### CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

#### SUNDAY SERVICES

|                       |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|
| Church School .....   | 9:30 A. M.  |
| Morning Worship ..... | 11:00 A. M. |
| B. T. U .....         | 6:00 P. M.  |
| Evening Worship ..... | 8:00 P. M.  |

#### WEEKLY MEETINGS:

|                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Tuesday 4 P. M. ....   | Junior Church             |
| 7 P. M. ....           | Orchestra Rehearsal       |
| 8 P. M. ....           | Gospel Chorus Rehearsal   |
| Wednesday 6 P. M. .... | Boy Scouts Meeting        |
| 7 P. M. ....           | Junior Choir Rehearsal    |
| 8 P. M. ....           | Senior Choir Rehearsal    |
| Friday 8 P. M. ....    | Prayer and Praise Service |

#### MONTHLY MEETINGS

|                           |                  |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| 1st Sunday—8 P. M. ....   | Communion        |
| 4th Thursday—8 P. M. .... | Business Meeting |



## A PART OF OUR SUNDAY

### OUR PRESENT ORGANIZATION

The Pastor ..... Dr. Baxter L. Matthews  
Church Clerk ..... William A. Chatmon  
Financial Secretary ..... Mrs. Rama H. Greene  
Treasurer ..... Benjamin P. Dixon

#### DEACON BOARD

|                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| Harry L. Ayers     | Benjamin Hamilton |
| Owen D. Barfield   | John R. Hill      |
| Paul V. Brabham    | Robert Jones      |
| Henry T. Campbell  | Robert H. Lane    |
| William A. Chatmon | Joseph Sadler     |
| Benjamin P. Dixon  | Cornelius Smith   |
| L. M. Greene       | Deaver Smith      |

Webster D. Thomas

#### TRUSTEES

|                           |                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| L. H. Davenport, Chairman | Henry A. Blackwell  |
| Dr. A. O. Reid            | William H. Thornton |

#### FINANCE BOARD

|                           |                   |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| L. H. Davenport, Chairman | John R. Hill      |
| Henry A. Blackwell        | Harry L. Ayers    |
| J. Harvey Smith           | Henry T. Campbell |
| Mrs. Rama H. Greene       |                   |

#### CHURCH SCHOOL

|                |                         |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| A. B. Koger    | Superintendent          |
| Dr. F. M. Wood | Superintendent Emeritus |

|                        |                               |
|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Wm. A. Chatmon         | 1st Assistant                 |
| Richard Blackwell      | 2nd Assistant                 |
| Ester Baskerville      | 3rd Assistant                 |
| Hattie Tyler           | Primary Superintendent        |
| Mrs. Richard Blackwell | Junior Superintendent         |
| Alma Francis           | Intermediate Superintendent   |
| Ruth Mason             | Young People's Superintendent |
| Henry Blackwell, Sr.   | Adult Superintendent          |
| Carrie D. James        | Corresponding Secretary       |
| Zelma A. Harris        | Financial Secretary           |
| E. E. Weaver           | Treasurer                     |
| Thomas Williams        | Assistant Treasurer           |
| James Young            | Conductor Orchestra           |
| Ruth Greene            | Pianist                       |
| Veola Coleman          | Chorister                     |
| Owen D. Barfield       | Librarian                     |
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|--------------------|-----------|
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| Miss Evelyn L. Greene      |

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|                       |
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| Mrs. Henrietta Miller |
| Mr. Douglass Burrell  |
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MANPOWER:  
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---

TO OUR DEPARTED DEAD

A LITANY

For the stalwart Ministers who have labored at  
The Union and given of their time, labor, spiritual  
talents and faithful services,

We are grateful to Thee, Dear Lord!

For the many officers, in their numerous fields  
of endeavor, who have served well to hold up their  
Ministers' hands and have given to Union of their  
time, labor, sustenance and strength,

We render thanks to Thee, Dear Lord!

For the many faithful members of our church—  
noble men and devoted and consecrated women —  
who, in season and out, gave to The Union the first  
of their labor,

We praise Thee, Dear Lord!

For those who rendered service on various Com-  
mittees, handling in many instances, difficult and  
unpleasant problems,

We acknowledge our gratitude, Dear Lord!

For those who ministered in Song, giving of their  
rich and sweet voices in thanksgiving and praise  
and for those who magnified Thee on string in-  
strument and organ,

We bow in reverence, Dear Lord!

For that great host of Officers and Teachers who  
in the Church Schools and various other auxiliaries,  
have led younger minds to a deeper and fuller reali-  
zation and appreciation of Thee and the more  
abundant life that Thou doth offer,

We laud and magnify Thy name, Dear Lord!

For that great host of members, friends and well-  
wishers, who by words of praise, advice, encourage-  
ment and by their attitudes of sympathy and even  
by their golden moments of silence, have added to  
The Union's scope of influence,

We are ever grateful, Dear Lord!

For the Ministers we have ordained and sent out  
and the three Missionaries, who went into foreign  
fields, carrying, not only the "Words of Life" to  
others, but the breath of The Union in their very  
wake,

We stand in awe, Dear Lord!

For the numerous Churches and Missions, planted  
by The Union in Thy name and which have borne  
rich fruit in service, for Thee,

We sincerely bless Thee, Dear Lord!

For the presence of the spirits of these Departed  
Saints which constantly inspire and challenge those  
of us living, to give of the best that we have  
that their work and service may not have been in  
vain,

We bless and adore Thee, Dear Lord!—Amen.

---

# HISTORY OF OUR PASTORS

---

## REV. JOHN CAREY

Little is known about the Rev. John Carey, founder, and for three years, minister of the Union Baptist Church.

In 1924, I talked with an elderly lady then a member of the First Baptist Church, who declared that she knew when he came to Baltimore. That he worked and had his belongings tied up in a bandana handkerchief swung on a stick across his shoulder. That he was very modest and retiring and talked in a very shrill voice. She asserted that "he was highly educated."

From the fact that he was into so many things of interest to the denomination, the latter could be easily true.

He was one of the incorporators of the American Baptist Association the first effort to organize the Negro Baptist Churches, nationally. Served on several important committees; and was a member of its Executive Board. He was listed then as being from the State of New York.

In 1849 he was called to the pastorate of the First Baptist Church, the Rev. Moses Clayton, having given away for a more educated man. His tenure there was hectic and full of financial difficulties. In the November church meeting, 1851, he offered a resolution that the church building be sold to pay off the congregations' many debts. This was done the following January and his resignation followed immediately. On April 22 following, he organized a Sunday School and on May 10th this was further organized into the Union Baptist Church. A long drawn-out law suit followed between this group and the original church, but in the end the Carey faction won out.

The Rev. Mr. Carey resigned the Union in 1854 or early in 1855, and left the city. From 1865 to 1868 he was a missionary for the American Baptist Home Missionary Society and was founder of a church at Yorktown, Va. An inquiry to this church brought back the answer that while there is no definite record to that effect, there is a tradition that he died there. In 1885 a writer suggests, however, that Mr. Carey was then with a church in New Jersey.

## REV. CHAUNCEY LEONARD

Of the Rev. Chauncey Leonard, we know very little.

He was called to the pastorate of The Union in 1856 and served for about two years. While in Baltimore, it will be recalled that the Maryland Union Association launched its great effort to help the Negroes by not only establishing a fine building for church and religious purposes, but a school as well. This school effort grew to over a hundred pupils and three teachers. The Rev. Mr. Leonard was principal of this school.

Upon leaving the Union he went as pastor to the Second Baptist Church in Washington, D. C.

In 1868 he organized the Mt. Hope Baptist Church at Dorchester, Charles County and in 1869 established the Bladensburg Baptist Church at Bladensburg, Md. In 1870 he was a missionary under the American Baptist Home Missionary Society.

He too was affiliated with the American Baptist Association and preached its annual sermon in 1855. He was elected president in 1859.

Just where he finally settled, or died is unknown.

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## REV. WILLIAM WILLIAMS

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Practically nothing is known about the early life and preparation of the Rev. William Williams, third pastor of The Union.

He was called to the pastorate at Union in 1861 and served for eight years, during those hectic days of the Civil War and early Reconstruction. His optimistic reports and fine outlook for his race indicate the greatness and nobleness of his character.

During his ministry he led the church from Lewis Street to the North Street site, and increased its membership from 65 to 210. That he was held in very high regard by the other ministers of the city may be attested to by the action of the Rev. Noah Davis, founder and wholtime



REV. WM. WILLIAMS

minister of the Saratoga Street venture, when that very distinguished prelate lay dying in 1866. He assembled his little congregation about him and urged them to disband and go to join the Union Baptist Church under the Rev. William Williams. This new life and added manpower forged Union a step ahead and gave her a prestige she had never before known.

On May 2nd, 1869 the Rev. Williams conducted his regular morning worship as he was wont to do; baptized five persons in the afternoon and was in the act of giving out the hymn, "Lord Why Was I Made to Hear Thy Voice," when he lost his speech and fainted. He never regained his speech and died eleven days thereafter. He was buried within Laurel Cemetery with other notables of our great church.

In tradition and memory he was revered as one of the strong characters within our early denominational life. In later years the leaders of our church honored him by naming its school for him and Moses Clayton, "The Clayton-Williams Seminary."

## History of Pastors Continued

not in mind but body. He could not attend many of the services held in his honor. Men from every walk of life appeared in some manner to do him honor. Teachers, lawyers, Doctors, Bishops, business men and laymen from every station in life, blended together their testimonials for the services they realized that he had rendered humanity. Some of the papers read on that occasion, had they been preserved for us, would have been far more valuable, historically, than this little story, and surely prepared in a more scholarly fashion.

Nineteen-twenty-two closed and the first Sunday in the next year came and with it the regular Communion service at Union Baptist Church. Dr. Johnson was there too, where for over fifty years, he had administered that Holy Ordinance. As he took up the communion cup that day he remarked, "This cup is so heavy, but I intend to perform my duties until I drop."

The very next day, Monday, he attended the meeting of the Baptist Ministers Conference, his last public appearance, for on the following Friday, January 12, 1923, as quietly and as peaceably as a baby's sleep, his great soul passed over to its Maker.

He had arranged his funeral, and provided that it should be as plain as he had tried to live. It was to last but one hour and to be conducted by his long and tried friend, Dr. Walter H. Brooks, pastor of 19th Street Baptist Church, Washington, D. C.

Two thousand admiring friends taxed every available inch of the Church auditorium where the last rites were to be said. Two thousand more crowded the sidewalks and streets without. Fully three times this many had passed the bier the hour before as his body lay in state within the sacred old stone walls he had reared with untiring labor.

The Rev. D. G. Mack, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church, acted as Master of Ceremonies. Dr. Brooks read a text, Geneses 5:24:

"And Enoch Walked With God and was not, for God took him." He spoke feelingly as follows:

"Dr. Johnson was among that group of ministers who came into the foreground in the decade immediately following emancipation of the 4,500,000 slaves in the country. From 1872 till now he was the honored pastor of this church. He

was a preacher of fire and soul, a John Jasper, but cultivated and learned.

Without deceit of any kind, he was ever ready to let his convictions be known. He was a fighter for the race. I loved Harvey Johnson as a man who studied the spiritual needs of his people. He was the real pastor, never old in spirit and always keeping time with the advancing trend of the age. He was an independent thinker. I did not always agree with him, but I never failed to love him."

His remains were buried in the family plot in the Laurel Cemetery beside the grave of the wife he loved so well in life.

The church under the guidance of the next pastor, erected a fine and suitable granite monument over his grave and to his memory.

Two church buildings! Thousands of dollars in missions! Equal and better advantages for Negro boys and girls yet unborn! Religious joys and spiritual awakenings! Economic advantages and more freedom! A granite monument! All these and more to his credit and memory and yet, far above and beyond all these accomplishments as great as they are; even as a towering monument and a beacon light, a challenge to all leaders to come, are the fifty or more years in public and religious life with a character unblemished or untarnished. "He who dares more is none."

The present pastor of the church is honoring his services by offering the name Harvey Johnson Community House for the project started as a Parish House.

A high school in the City has been named for him. The National Negro Bar Association which met in the city in 1925 revered that memory by the placing of a wreath of flowers upon his grave.

representatives at the

at the building had been year or early the next.

re secured in 1855.

tes Union into a church Parsonage purchased.

over's services terminated.

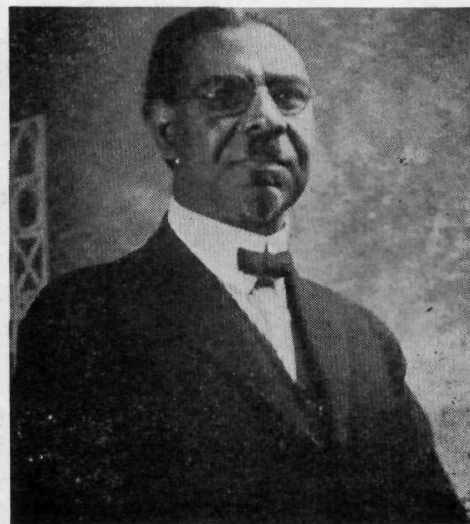
J. T. Boddie called as pastor.

Boddie resigned.

Church called Dr. Baxter L. Matthews.

Church purchased the building next door to develop as Parish House.

"The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad."



DR. DAVID E. OVER

Rev. David E. Over was born in Topeka, Kansas in 1873. He was educated in the public schools of the State and at the Ottawa University, Ottawa, Kansas. Later, the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity was conferred on him by North Carolina College for Negroes, Durham, N. C.

At the outbreak of the Spanish-American War he was a volunteer and was made a Sergeant in Company "H," 23rd Kansas Infantry.

In 1900 he married a Miss Mary A. Garner, a teacher and very cultured lady of Kansas City.

Dr. Over entered the ministry shortly after his release from the Army and served four or five charges in the west prior to his call to the Zion Baptist Church in Denver, Colo., one of the oldest and most influential churches west of the Mississippi.

(Continued on Page 20)

In 1846, we note, in passing, Hicks, later a pastor of the First C. tant figure in church life of the State delegates to the Union Association.

It will be recalled that in 1866 venture (the second colored Baptist established), came to an end with the The majority of these faithful work

## History of Pastors Continued



**REV. J. TIMOTHY BODDIE AND HIS DEAR FAMILY**

In 1923, Dr. Over resigned this charge and became traveling agent for the National Baptist Convention, Unincorporated. The following year he accepted the call to The Union Baptist Church of Baltimore.

A ripe thinker, great orator and distinguished pulpiteer, he made rapid progress at his new charge. Among the improvements were the purchasing of the parsonage, the erection of a monument over the remains of the late Dr. Harvey Johnson and his work and interest in missions.

Among the many reforms and changes Rev. Over advocated in a great program

and on May 10th this was further organized into the Union Baptist Church. A long drawn out law suit followed between this group and the original church, but in the end the Carey faction won out.

The Rev. Mr. Carey resigned the Union in 1854 or early in 1955, and left the city. From 1865 to 1868 he was a missionary for the American Baptist Home Missionary Society and was founder of a church at Yorktown, Va. An inquiry to this church brought back the answer that while there is no definite record to that effect, there is a tradition that he died there. In 1885 a writer suggests, however, that Mr. Carey was then with a church in New Jersey.

Ohio, officiated at the funeral which drew to Baltimore many notables of the denomination. His body lay in State at the Providence Baptist Church, where a host of admiring friends and loyal members paid a final tribute. He was buried in Mt. Auburn Cemetery and later a grateful following erected a suitable monument to his memory.

At the time of his death, Dr. Over was a trustee of Virginia Lynchburg Seminary. Besides Mrs. Over, a daughter, Mrs. Edna Over-Gray survives.

**REV. JAMES TIMOTHY BODDIE** early life and preparation of the Rev. William Williams, third pastor of The Union.

He was called to the pastorate at Union in 1861 and served for eight years, during those hectic days of the Civil War and early Reconstruction. His optimistic reports and fine outlook for his race indicate the greatness and nobleness of his character.

During his ministry he led the church from Lewis Street to the North Street site, and increased its membership from 65 to 210. That he was held in very high regard by the other ministers of the city may be attested to by the action of the Rev. Noah Davis, founder and wholetime

Bachelor of Divinity Degree three years later. In 1938 Virginia Theological Seminary conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

Prior to his call to The Union, Rev. Boddie received pastoral experience at the following churches:

Bethesda Baptist, New Rochelle, N. Y.  
Second Calvary, Norfolk, Va.  
Forest Level, Forest, Va., and  
Union Baptist, Lackawanna, N. Y.

He was called to succeed the Rev. Dr. Over as minister and began his duties upon his graduation in 1929. During his ten years at Union he was generally liked by his membership and became active and noted within the city as a civic worker for our people.

In June, 1928, he married Miss Emery M. Moore, daughter of the Rev. and Mrs. J. A. Moore of Chicago, Ill. From this Union three children were born in Baltimore, Marcia Lorraine and Vashti Ophe-  
lia, girls, and a son, James Timothy, Jr.

He resigned the pastorate in October 1939 to accept a call to the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Germantown, Pa.

A clean, likeable, friendly type of young man, with high ideals and a warm and emotional nature, Rev. Boddie endeared himself to his congregation and it was with regrets that his beloved church released him, at the time of his going

## THE HISTORY OF UNION AT A GLANCE

1852—April 22, Sunday School organized.

May 10, The Union Baptist Church organized by Rev. John Carey.

October, Joined the Maryland Union Association.

1853—Church began buying the Lewis Street edifice.

1855—The Church incorporated.

Rev. John Carey resigned.

1856—Rev. Chauncey Leonard called as pastor.

1858—Rev. Chauncey Leonard resigned.

1861—The Church called Rev. Wm. Willliam as her pastor.

1866—The Saratoga St. congregation disbands and joins the Union.

1868—The Church purchased the Disciples' Meeting House on North Street, and moved there.

1869—Church ordained and called Rev. Wm. P. Thompson as her minister.

1869—Rev. William Williams died suddenly.

called that the First Baptist Church had in 1841 under its founder, the Rev. Moses of the denomination here. This church John Carey in 1849 and the records show two years of his ministry there the church al difficulties. The building was sold to January 1852 and the Rev. Carey resign- mediately. As most of the early officers of ormerly officers of the First Church, there doubt that these officers came along with form The Union.

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1926—The Parsonage purchased.

1928—Dr. Over's services terminated.

1929—Rev. J. T. Boddie called as pastor.

1939—Rev. Boddie resigned.

1940—The Church called Dr. Baxter L. Matthews.

The Church purchased the building next door to develop as a Parish House.

"The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

maintained regular worship. Strangership increased to 65 without su was in 1861, at about the outbre when the church called to her aid William Williams.

## UPWARD TRE

With the coming of Rev. William in Union's history begins. In spite of trying days of the Civil War, the church successfully carried on. At times below the mark, but seemingly never discouraged. As he reported, the "trials have greatly affected the church," yet a hopeful remark, the "house is sometimes close of the war the church was at a prosperous year" with a membership of 100. The Sunday School began to flourish with three teachers and 20 scholars for the year of \$4.16 and 50 volumes.

When one reads the minutes of (white) during this terrible war period, by comparison, the magnitude

In 1846, we note, in passing, Hicks, later a pastor of the First C  
tant figure in church life of the Stat  
delegates to the Union Association.

It will be recalled that in 1866 venture (the second colored Baptist established), came to an end with the The majority of these faithful work

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**REV. J. TIMOTHY BODDIE AND HIS DEAR FAMILY**

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agent for the Na to Baltimore many notables of the deno-  
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**Union Baptist: L X SYSTEM**

Bachelor of Divinity go to —  
later. In 1938 Virg's Always  
nary conferred up  
Doctor of Divinity.  
Prior to his cal  
Boddie received p  
the following church  
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Second Calvary,  
Forest Level, Fone: 0816-J  
Union Baptist: L  
He was called to  
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In June, 1928, H  
M. Moore, daughter  
J. A. Moore of Ch  
Union three childr

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The UNION BAPTIST CHURCH of BALTIMORE  
and

The Ministers Who Made Her Famous

by

A. BRISCOE KOGER



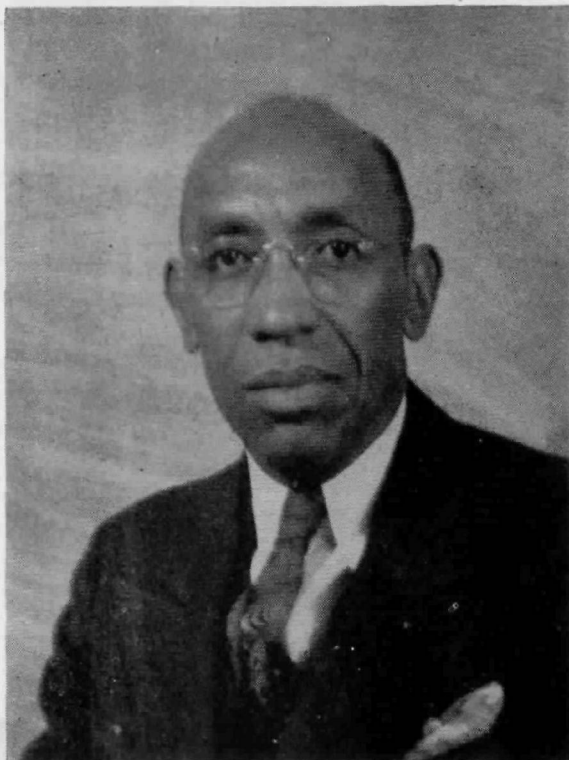
THE UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF BALTIMORE

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## The Present Pastor Of The Union



REV. BAXTER L. MATTHEWS, B. D., D. D.  
Our Pastor

### REV. DR. BAXTER L. MATTHEWS

The Rev. Dr. Baxter Leget Matthews, present pastor of The Union, a native of Kernersville, N. C., is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Matthews.

He received his early schooling in the public schools of his home town. Matriculated at A. and T. College, Greensboro, where he took, in addition to his regular studies, floriculture.

He next enrolled as a student at Union University (Va.), finishing the Academy in 1919 and the College and Theological Departments in 1922. During this period he received pastoral experience at Phoebus, Va.

He was called to the Union Baptist Church at Stamford, Conn. and began his ministry there the first Sunday in January, 1923, where he served until he took over his present charge on March 1, 1940.

At Stamford he built up a fine fellowship and finished one unit of a new building which promises to be a fine church edifice. He was active also in the civic affairs of the City. Was interested in the



Our First Lady  
MRS. MATTHEWS

Boy Scout work there; was a supervisor of the Colored Division of the Needy Children's Camp; a member of the Executive Board of the Community Chest and affiliated with the Chamber of Commerce. The Baptists of the State honored him by electing him president of the State Convention, where he served for thirteen years. During his ministry in Connecticut he lost his first wife but in June 1940 was united in wedlock to a Miss Mae Wilder of Passaic, New Jersey.

Already a trained man, Dr. Matthews decided to further his studies and accordingly again matriculated at Yale University where after four years he graduated with degrees from the Divinity School and Religious Education.

Union University bestowed upon him in 1936, the degree "Doctor of Divinity."

Since being in the City he has been elected to the Visitor's Board at Johns Hopkins Hospital.

Thoroughly prepared, energetic, sincere and yet with a fine sense of humor, he bids fair to have a long and successful career at the Union.

# HISTORY OF UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF BALTIMORE

THE UNION BAPTIST CHURCH OF BALTIMORE  
and  
THE MINISTERS WHO MADE HER FAMOUS

THE Union Baptist Church of Baltimore was organized May 10th, 1852 on Lewis Street between Orleans and Mullikin Sts. in East Baltimore, Md. That it took this name from the beginning, there can be no doubt, other claims notwithstanding. It reported the following October to the Maryland Baptist Union Association with this name. The pseudonym, "Lewis Street Baptist Church" only distinguished its location, as did "North Street" later.

The congregation was established with fifty-seven members, about thirty of whom came along with the Rev. John Carey, its founder, from the First Baptist Church, and others, who came presumably, from an obscure mission then existing in the vicinity of the Bel Air Market.

It will be recalled that the First Baptist Church had built an edifice in 1841 under its founder, the Rev. Moses Clayton, father of the denomination here. This church called the Rev. John Carey in 1849 and the records show that during the two years of his ministry there the church ran into financial difficulties. The building was sold to pay its debts in January 1852 and the Rev. Carey resigned almost immediately. As most of the early officers of Union were formerly officers of the First Church, there can be little doubt that these officers came along with Rev. Carey to form The Union.

The church now undertook to buy this edifice from the purchaser, one Benjamin Brown, recorded on the deed as a "free Negro." Brown had been a former officer of the First Church. The purchase price as recorded was two hundred forty-nine dollars and fifty cents.

The year after its organization the report to the Union Association speaks of "marked progress" and proudly points out that one-half of its purchase price had been paid as well as the Ground Rent of fifty dollars. The membership was then given as 58 and the money sent up to the Association was \$1.50.

One Samuel Hackett, the first clerk, and the Rev. John Carey were the credited representatives at the session.

The report for 1854 recites that the building had been paid for. The latter part of this year or early the next. The Rev. Carey resigned.

Both its Deed and Charter were secured in 1855.

The document which incorporates Union into a church is an interesting paper. It attempts to declare the general principles of the Baptist Church; outlines the duties of the pastor, deacons and trustees; limits the voting powers to the "males of the age of twenty-one and above" and refers to the pastor as "BISHOP." This declaration is followed by a certificate which recites:

"We, the undersigned, do hereby certify that this Constitution was adopted by the members of the Lewis Street Baptist Church, in Baltimore City, at the organization of the Church and that we, the subscribers were duly elected trustees and pastor of the said church, Wit-

ness our hands this 10th day of May, 1852."

This certificate was signed by John Carey as pastor and Thomas R. Reams, John Ashton, John Madden, Benjamin Brown and Thomas Jones. Of these, Thomas Jones and Thomas Reams made their marks.

Thomas Reams, one of the signers of the incorporation papers, and one Brother Charles Smith represented the church in the Union Association and reported "no pastor and 43 members."

In April 1856, the church called as pastor the late Rev. Chancey Leonard, reputed to have been a gentleman of very high Christian character. The congregation was much improved in morale, and peace and harmony ruled during his stay of two years. The membership now went back to its starting point of 57. Rev. Leonard resigned in 1858 and the Rev. Mr. Isaac Kendall was called the latter part of this year, but very promptly declined the call when he found that the church was too poor to pay a salary.

In 1859-60 the church had no pastor, but in a measure maintained regular worship. Strange to say the membership increased to 65 without such a leader and so it was in 1861, at about the outbreak of the Civil War when the church called to her aid the services of Rev. William Williams.

## UPWARD TREND

With the coming of Rev. Williams the first real step in Union's history begins. In spite of those terrible and trying days of the Civil War, the Rev. Mr. Williams successfully carried on. At times his membership trailed below the mark, but seemingly he never grew tired or discouraged. As he reported, the "troubles of the country have greatly affected the church," yet, he gives the cheerful remark, the "house is sometimes crowded." By the close of the war the church was able to report a "very prosperous year" with a membership of 124. This same year the Sunday School began to show some added life with three teachers and 20 scholars and a total collection for the year of \$4.16 and 50 cents.

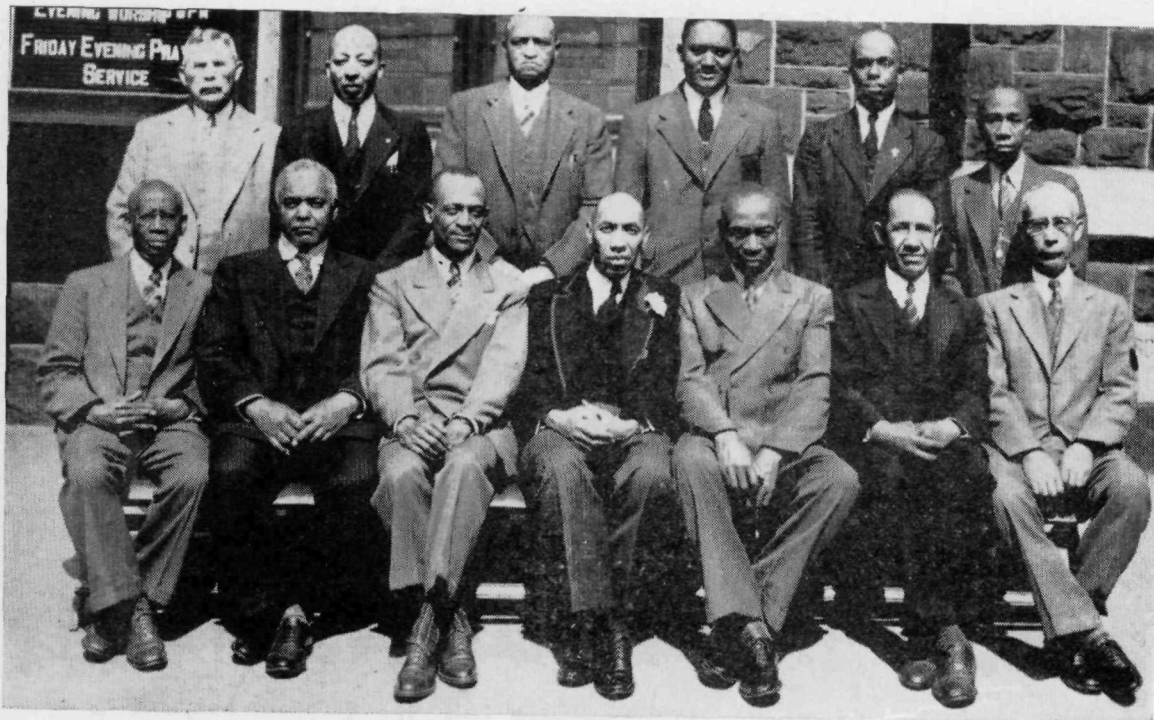
When one reads the minutes of the other churches (white) during this terrible war period, he can appreciate by comparison, the magnitude of this effort.

In 1846, we note, in passing, that Brother Lewis Hicks, later a pastor of the First Church and an important figure in church life of the State, was one of Union's delegates to the Union Association.

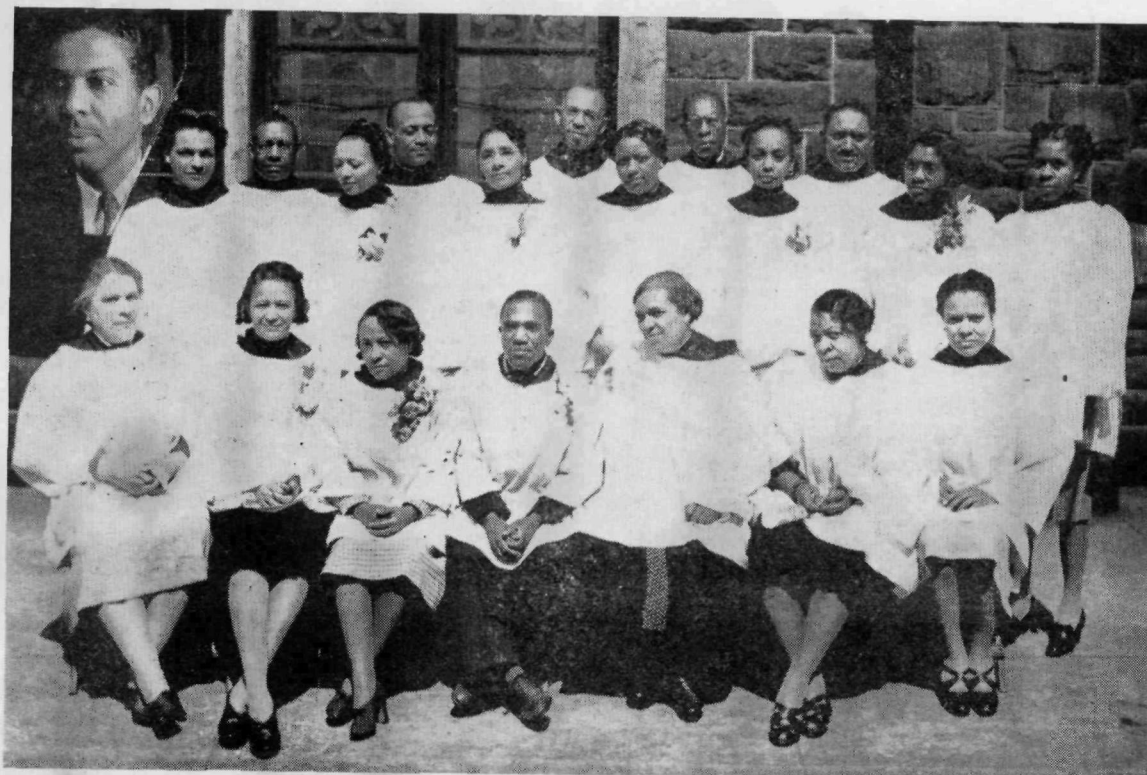
It will be recalled that in 1866 the Saratoga Street venture (the second colored Baptist Church to be established), came to an end with the church's failure.

The majority of these faithful workers joined Union and brought untold strength to this struggling congregation. In her later history the names of several of her most prominent members are those who came to Union at this time—men, who had touched and been influenced by that fine and noble old character, Rev. Noah Davis, who had fathered that band of pioneers. These include the Madden brothers, Deacon West; the Weavers, including the illustrious Brother Benjamin Weaver; the Blackwells and W. P. Thompson, who later became pastor of the church.

Mr. Weaver had been elected in 1859, superintendent



THE PASTOR AND BOARD OF DEACONS



OUR GREAT SENIOR CHOIR  
Inset — Prof Houston R. Jackson, Choir Master

## History Continued

of the Saratoga Street Sunday School and upon his coming to Union, was immediately placed in charge. For about forty years thereafter he piloted this auxiliary.

The church in 1867 reported "a very prosperous year" with Rev. William Williams and W. P. Thompson as official representatives. The newcomers had brought new life and energy to the Union. Her services were now over-crowded, the church therefore took thought of securing larger quarters. The Maryland Union Association through its Extension Society and the help of such good white men as the late Rev. Franklin Wilson, Christopher West, Hiram Woods, Henry Taylor and others, finally agreed to help finance the buying of the Old Disciples' Meeting House on North Street (now Guilford Avenue.) The church moved to this site in 1868.

This move however, met with considerable opposition and a lawsuit followed by those who tenaciously held on to the old Lewis Street site. The Union won eventually and the twenty-six members who had been excluded were restored.

In all, the Rev. Mr. Williams served Union for about eight years; anxious and long years during those turbulent days of the Civil War; years of toil and real sacrifice. At the close of his great work Union could boast of 210 members, a very fine meeting house to worship in; a flourishing little Sunday School of nine officers and 67 members and 230 volumes in her "library." The Sunday School's collections for the year amounted to \$38.32. Peace and harmony prevailed and a new viewpoint and hope had seized the Baptist heart.

In the autumn after the death of Rev. Williams, the church ordained William P. Thompson and called him immediately to carry on the work he had manifested so much interest in and knew so much about. He was a native of Baltimore, a very young man and gave promise of a great future.

For his first year's effort he counted nine conversions and by the next year was able to report 47 as having been added by baptism to the roster of members. Moreover, the entire indebtedness on the building had been paid, two members were out studying for the ministry and there was a total membership of two hundred sixty-seven.

But alas! This usefulness was to be short lived, for early in January 1872, death claimed him as an untimely victim.

From February until October the church was again without a minister. Under the guidance of such faithful laymen as French Madden, William C. Lawson, Royston Blackwell and Henry P. Waters, she continued her activities, the collecting of funds for the buying of the ground about her building. During this period and through the thoughtfulness of the late Reverend Dr. G. M. P. King, then president of Wayland Seminary, the was amply pulpit supplied by students and former graduates of this famous old institution. It was during an engagement of this sort that the church discovered in the young graduate Harvey Johnson the type of leadership it deserved and called him in late October of this year as its leader.

As glorious as had been Union's history up to this date, her real program of usefulness begins from this memorable date. Not only of Union, as that matters, for as Dr. George F. Bragg, Jr., has wisely opined, it is from this date that the history of the Maryland Negro Baptists begins.

### THE HARVEY JOHNSON ADMINISTRATION

It was in October 1872 that the young Rev. Harvey Johnson took charge of the Union Baptist Church. Although the Baptist cause had been planted within our group in Maryland at least thirty-six years, the number of Colored Baptists within the State numbered less than five hundred. In the brief space of time between Rev. Thompson's death (January) and the calling of Dr. Harvey Johnson (October) the little church, now thoroughly alive with enthusiasm, "carried on" in the collecting of funds for the new building and so with a new pastor, the church became a bee-hive in activities.

Rev. Johnson was a forceful and convincing leader and also a great gospel preacher. Soon the people turned out "en masse" to hear him and very quickly indeed the results showed in the church register of members. Within the first two years the church membership was over the five-hundred mark, nor was it growing in membership alone. Soon after his coming Rev. Johnson thought to make the church self-respecting and independent, by making it self-supporting. He accordingly, refused all aid from the Union Association and called upon the church to bear its own burdens. By 1874 the building had been outgrown and all plans made for a new one. The next year the membership was nine hundred and twenty, the old building had been torn away, and another was being built. The minute book informs that "two are studying for the ministry and we have a missionary who has aided in organizing two churches in Carroll and Frederick Counties."

On January 23, 1876, the new church building was formally dedicated. The entire structure had cost over \$20,000, an enormous sum in those days.

And so Union grew by leaps and bounds. By 1877 her register showed 1,368 members and an additional hundred the next year. A program of expansion had been inaugurated and four mission Sunday Schools were established in the city; four men were studying for the ministry and a mission had been planted at Westminster, Maryland.

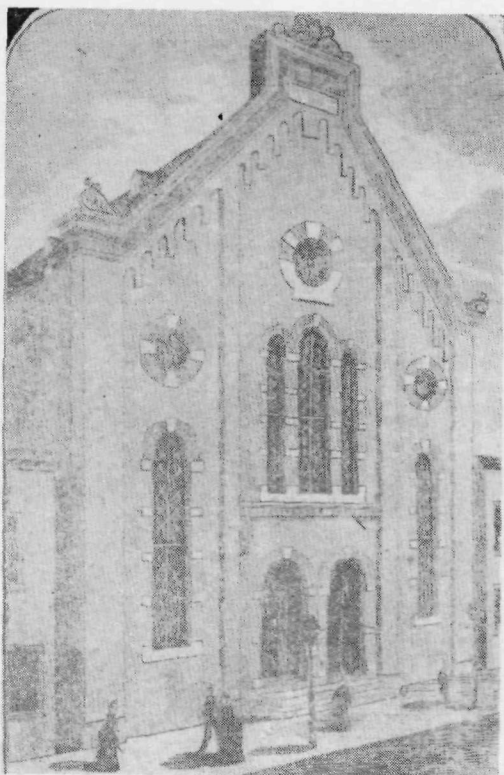
In the meantime (September 29 1874) 16 members had been granted letters and the Macedonia Church been established. In 1879 twenty-seven members were set apart as the Perkins Square Baptist Church.

Going back to her other records, by 1879 all indebtedness had been wiped out and the report the following year gave the number studying for the ministry as six.

The roll steadily increased and by 1885 had crossed the 2,000 marks, nor did it stop until in 1912 it reached its peak with a membership of 3,028.

I might go on indefinitely, but shall have to content myself in generalities by saying that Union is reasonably regarded as the fountainhead of missions of our denomination.

In the little table found elsewhere I have attempted



THE NORTH STREET EDIFICE.



OUR PRESENT TRUSTEE BOARD



OTHER MAKERS OF HISTORY

1-4, Ordained from Union: Revs. Walker, Dennis, Alexander, Watson; 5, S. S. Booker, a former S. S. Supt.; 6, Deacon Brabham, Custodian; 7, Attorney L. G. Koger, Pres. Brotherhood; 8, Dr. F. M. Wood, S. S. Supt. Emeritus; 9, Fenton Mallory, S. S. Teacher, 14 years without absence; 10, L. H. Davenport, Trustee and oldest member; 11, Wm. A. Chatmon, our Clerk; 12, A. B. Koger, S. S. Supt., author of this work, etc. 13, Mrs. Veola Coleman; 14, J. P. Evans (Deceased). 15, Dr. H. Johnson (1872).

## History Continued

to list some of the churches established by the Union during this administration as well as a number of ministers ordained. This cold list, by no means can tell of the Struggle, assistance, hard fought problems overcome and of the time and attention as well as organization required to accomplish these ends. Nor does the list include those student-ministers who made special appeals to Union for aid and were always remembered. This spirit has been manifest in other administrations. Under Dr. Over two young ministers were assisted, viz. the Rev. Bradshaw and D. A. Scott. In the Boddie administration our own Hyason Diggs, received substantial aid.

Nor has this aid been extended to ministers alone, as evidenced by the fact that a set of books was given to the first colored lawyer admitted to practice in Baltimore.

Among the mission Sunday Schools, teachers and literature were often supplied, while in the case of the mission at Westminster, Md. an edifice at a cost of \$850.00 was erected by the Union.

Historians of the future will have to chronicle more in detail these and other undertakings of this great institution and the great leaders who made it famous. Well might Dr. George F. Bragg, Jr., in his "Men of Maryland" declare that it was Dr. Harvey Johnson who put the Baptists of Maryland on the ecclesiastical map. Suffice it to say, that Union's influence has been felt throughout the nation and her offspring of ministers have held charges from Massachusetts to Texas. Her laymen are legion and their influence inestimable. I venture to say in practically every church within the city, may be found laymen, who can, and in most cases, do with pride, point out, that they received inspiration, growth and training from the Union.

When The Union had worshipped at the old North Street site for about twenty-eight years, the farsighted leader saw that the time had come for a change. To follow the trend of the shift in Negro population to the Northwest section, was the desire of its membership. The trustees were therefore advised to locate a site there. After considerable effort, lots were secured on Druid Hill Avenue above Dolphin Street (the present site). In course of time the building was started.

In the meantime the old North Street meeting house was sold and services were conducted in the Nazarene Hall. The last Sunday of worship at North Street was the first Sunday in May, 1904.

The new edifice was dedicated December 17, 1905. It had cost \$51,256. The ground purchased in 1921, cost an additional \$6,500.00. The building is of stone and has poured stained-glass windows. It has a lecture-Sunday School department on the ground floor, as well as toilet, kitchen and offices, one or two store-rooms and a small library storage room. On the second floor the main auditorium will seat about eight hundred; there also is the pastor's study, the officers room, the choir's room, and Finance room. Her pipe organ was built back and overhead of the pulpit rostrum. The walls are fresco and the wood done in Mahogany.

In a work of this length I cannot point out the work-

ings of this master mind and of this interested and working congregation during the golden years that followed. Pick up here and there throughout this story, the little threads of its workings in missions and education and in other lines and weave them together into the beautiful fabric of usefulness.

Enfeebled now and literally worn out in service, Dr. Johnson merely held on in the early twenties. In November 1922 the church celebrated Dr. Johnson's half century anniversary. Men from every walk of life did him honor. He died the following January.

As long as was this ministry however, no panic came to Union. Dr. Johnson had planned that and the set of officers he had trained took the reins and carried on pending the search for a leader.

During these two years all outstanding debts were paid and the entire church overhauled and painted.

### DR. OVER SERVES

In November 1924, almost two years after Dr. Johnson's death, the Rev. Dr. David E. Over, a former pastor of the Zion Baptist Church at Denver, Colo. came to Union as its minister. He was elderly and of the older school of thought.

Following, however, as he did a minister of the type and training of Dr. Johnson, it is neither strange, nor unusual that his task was a difficult one. During those last years of Dr. Johnson's administration, much of the younger life had left the church; the program was antiquated and unsuited and much tension felt. The strain and effects of the influx from the south, during and following the World War, were also being felt in Union as well as in many of the other churches of the city.

With Dr. Over's coming with his matchless technique as a noted pulpiteer, the church immediately took on new life and activity. Her pews were crowded on Sundays and her coffers bulged with the offerings of a people willing to undertake another great program.

During the brief tenure of office, nearly fifty thousand dollars were collected; a parsonage costing \$9,500 was purchased and furnished also, a suitable tombstone was erected to the memory of Dr. Johnson. The entire church was responsive and yielding. A program of expansion was advocated next, by the pastor. Unfortunately, one of the principle parts of this program of expansion, was the moving of the congregation to another site. Opposition arose immediately. The congregation regarded this church building as a shrine to their late leader and to talk of leaving it was sacrilege. Dr. Over insisted however, and the church reluctantly, but promptly severed its ties with him. (March 8, 1928).

Dr. Over organized, with a block of 187 prominent and active members who stuck to him, the Providence Baptist Church. Some few of this number later returned to the church however. Union was later successful in a lawsuit which grew out of this transaction.

Upon Dr. Over's leaving the church was again put in the hands of a Pulpit Committee which sought a leader for the congregation.



THE JUNIOR CHOIR — OUR PRIDE



OTHER MAKERS OF HISTORY  
Right—Rev. Edw. Brown, ordained at Union

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## History Continued

### THE BODDIE ADMINISTRATION

In May 1929 the Church called as its leader the Rev. J. Timothy Boddie, son of the late Rev. J. B. Boddie, noted evangelist. Though young for such responsibilities, Rev. Boddie guided Union through the early day of the depression, with great tact and skill.

He accepted the church's policy of pay-as-you-go-during-these-hard-times and emerged ten years later with an enviable record and a host of wellwishers and friends.

The material gains are not a fair test of this administration. The peace that Rev. Boddie lead the charge into; the fine spiritual and friendly attitude amount to more perhaps, than material gains. During the early part of the depression the Church fed several thousand persons while the government adjusted and formulated a policy of handling these. Later the administration repaired the windows, caulked her sides etc. repainted her entire interior and brought the choir down from the loft at the back, into a choir stand on the pulpit's level. The organ was also rebuilt.

The Rev. Boddie resigned in October 1929 and in March 1940 the Rev. Dr. Baxter L. Matthews assumed the leadership.

### OUR PRESENT EFFORTS

Newer life is being manifested in Union with the coming of the present minister. His services are attended well and his program is being accepted and responded to. Already he has made certain repairs to the windows and doors and fresh paints have been added to the parsonage and parts of the church proper.

That a long looked for dream of many of her members may at long last be realized is indicated by his desire for a community program. The property next door,—a three story dwelling—has been purchased and already plans are being made for renovation and this spring will no doubt usher in a small, but strong, Parish House effort.

That others are interested in the new order may be manifest in the number of workers undertaking new activities. Among the new organizations recently formed are, the Union Baptist Brotherhood with approximately one hundred members, a Youth's Guild and a Troup of Boy Scouts.

The Union of today is organized with a view towards having all members interested and working, in some auxiliary of the church. The adult membership proper is therefore assigned into groups called Circles, each with a leader or president. Besides these we have a Youth's Guild for the younger ladies and men of the Church where it is hoped they may find usefulness. The very young are assigned to a Junior Church Group, where special emphasis is placed on church membership training. We have a Boys' Scout Troop and look forward to having very soon, a Girls' Scout Troop. Of course, there is the usual Deacon and Trustee Boards, a Financial Board, Ladie's Usher Board, a Men's Usher Board, a Junior Men's Usher Board, a Senior Choir, a Junior Choir, a Gospel Chorus, the Church School, a Baptist Training Union, a Missionary Society and a Union Baptist Brotherhood.

In these it is expected that every member will find

outlet for his feelings, talents and usefulness. With the opening of our Parish House next door, these several organizations will find a fuller growth and development.

Elsewhere in this booklet, are listed the heads of these present-day organizations.

The Union's Sunday School must of necessity come in for a few words of special consideration. Older, by a few days, than the Church itself, it was organized April 22, 1852.

During its life it has enjoyed an enviable record. Fortunate in having had many able men and women enrolled in her ranks of workers, I list the late Benjamin Weaver, who for about forty years as superintendent, helped to shape her history. Mr. S. S. Booker, prominent Y. M. C. A. Executive Secretary here in the city was superintendent and a teacher of a Men's Bible Class for a number of years; T. Alexander Date, Mrs. Iantha Mallory, Mrs. Martha Clark and many others too numerous to mention, gave of their time and talents to make her the envy and pride of the denomination. Dr. Francis M. Wood, Superintendent Emeritus, had an unusually successful administration, attracting to it many of the school teachers of the city. The late Walter J. Thornton served in office for over fifty years and made valuable contributions.

The present School is not the biggest in the city, but is one of the best. Enthusiasm and thoroughness are to be found and a fine fellowship is in evidence. A faculty of thirty-six is divided into five departments with superintendents over each. A ten-piece orchestra, under the leadership of a professional musician, gives color to the music and singing to be found at scarcely any other place. I am proud to say that the school faculty has attracted seventeen public school teachers of the city, who disprove the general idea that professional people have forsaken the church work. Our new teachers take a two year's Teacher Training Course and among the Orchestra, teacher trainees and general staff, are to be found graduates and students of both the Morgan State and Coppin's Teachers Colleges.

Outlook for the future at The Union is very bright. With an experienced and well trained pastor at its head and with the several auxiliaries manned, in most cases with able, active and intelligent leaders, with the various Boards working in harmony with their leaders, and with the great spirit of fellowship and peace now prevailing, there is no reason why the Union of the future should not partake of the glory and grandeur of the past.

Union's program is heading towards the Institutional Church and someday, God willing, I predict, that The Union Baptist Church of Baltimore will move onward and upward to undimmed glory, making other enviable records in the annals of Baptist Church History.

Though primarily this story is a record of the ministers who gave to The Union her glorious history, it goes without saying that these accomplishments could not have been realized without the loyal and unstinted support of many, many faithful laymen. The Union has been fortunate in having an unusual share of stalwart men and women who have performed great services. In this line have been several who have given long and

(Continued on Page Eleven)

## History of Pastors Continued



**REV. WILLIAM P. THOMPSON**

The Rev. William P. Thompson, a son of the late Mrs. Rosalie Thompson was born in Baltimore in the year 1840.

He attended school from Friday, January 12, 1857, until he died quietly and as peaceably as a child under the care of his great soul passed over Rev. Noah D. Thompson.

and attended his funeral, and proper period of two years. He was an active member of the Saratoga Street Church and along with that congregation, joined the Union in 1866, where he became active in the Sunday School work.

He was licensed to preach in 1868 and upon the death of Rev. Wm. Williams, was ordained Sept. 12, 1869 at the Union Baptist Church, and called immediately as her minister. He was regarded as a great young preacher and maintained the fine standard set by his former pastors. He gave rise to great promise when he contracted the illness which finally claimed him. The first Sunday in January 1872, he preached from a Text, which in his case proved prophetic, "This year thou shalt die." He died on the 24th of this same month and with fitting honors was laid to rest just within the gates of Laurel Cemetery where a grateful congregation erected a small but suitable stone. He was only thirty-two years of age at his death.

Rev. Thompson while in school was

employed as colporter for a few months and in 1871 founded a church at Forest Hall in St. Mary's County. He was married early to a Miss Sarah Wood and from this union there were six children, viz: Mary Julia, Samuel W., Rose E., Thomas H., Sarah and Noah Davis Thompson. The latter was named for his former pastor. benefactor and friend and while several of the offspring have made marks in life the most noted was the late Noah D. Thompson, a former business manager of "Opportunity" magazine.

### REV. HARVEY JOHNSON

In a work of this extent, only the high spots in the life of Dr. Johnson may be touched upon. Some historian of the future will have to be depended upon to develop these. I shall give references at the end which will enable others to find material on this subject.

Dr. Harvey Johnson was born in Fauquier County, Virginia, August 4, 1843. the son of Thomas and Harriett Johnson, slaves.

He received schooling at a little private academy in Alexandria, Va., under a plan of apprenticeship in Philadelphia, and at the University of Washington, D. C., where he graduated in 1872. Later he attended the Virginia Baptist Seminary (Union Seminary) and received a degree "D. D."

He was called to the Union Baptist Church in the fall of 1872 and spent his entire ministry at this charge. His work there was phenomenal to a degree. He built two churches at a total cost of over eighty thousand dollars, left his beloved Union free of all debt and increased her membership from 270 to 3028 in 1912. He fellowshipped over 4000 members, baptized over three thousand and officiated at over two thousand marriages. Was its pastor for over 50 years.

In our State Conventional work he labored with the whites and held high office until 1892 when he separated over a policy of treatment of the whites to colored communicant. He would not accept a policy of the Negro church as that of a ward of the whites. He insisted that the Negro churchman must be upon the same footing and accepted with the same degree as any other. His entire program thereafter was run with this in mind.

In the National gatherings he insisted upon this and later concluded this impossible of realization, in September 1897

threw the National Convention into confusion by advocating the separation of Negro and white Baptists. He organized in June of the following year, the Colored Baptist Convention. He was also founder (1900) of the Clayton-Williams Seminary (Baltimore) for Negro preachers, which ran for 27 years.

He was foremost in the civic fights and struggles for equal citizenship for colored. He led fights for Negro school teachers; for the admission of Negro lawyers to the Maryland Bar; for better accommodations in interstate travel; he protested in person to the President of the United States in reference to lynchings within the country; he organized the Brotherhood of Liberty, the forerunner of the NAACP; he was author of the plan of a separate state for the Negro—the Texas Movement as it was called; he wrote several articles in papers and magazines concerning the questions of his day; was an ardent advocate of Prohibition; wrote several pamphlets on religious subjects and civic matters of his generation; he was a member of the first meeting of the Niagara Movement and of the NAACP; a life member of the American Baptist Home Mission Society; a Life Director of the American Baptist Publication Society; life member of the New England Baptist Missionary Convention and of several other organizations.

On April 17, 1877, Dr. Johnson married a Miss Amelia A. Hall of Montreal, Canada and from this union three children were born; viz, Harvey, Jr., Prentice R. and Jessie E. (Shaw).

Although Dr. Johnson held the affairs of Union in the palm of his hand and was lord over all who worked with and knew him, he cared such a little for money, he died rather poor of worldly goods. SERVICE was his watchword. Every aim and movement of his entire life was made with this in mind. He supervised the handling of thousands of dollars annually and might have named his salary as desired, but he preferred to live in the modest way in which he lived which after all made him the very unusual and unique character that he was.

Some little idea of his bigness may be gleaned from the following instances, when I say that for thirty of the fifty years that he served Union, his salary

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## History of Pastors Continued

averaged about a hundred dollars per month. Once in his absence, the church volunteered a raise of three hundred dollars and as a surprise upon his return, offered it to him. Not only did Dr. Johnson refuse this raise, but very promptly rebuked those who dared suggest it when the church, at that moment, was in debt.

Again, it was during the Golden Jubilee Celebration, held in 1922 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of his coming to Union, that a committee presented Dr. Johnson with a handsome purse containing fifty gold pieces. Fifty Golden Pieces! Dr. Johnson, always equal to the occasion, very courteously thanked the committee and turning to the table by which the Treasurer of the church sat, in an everyday-sought-of-a-way said, "Put it in the Church's Treasury. YOU need this more than I." These fitting words characterized his life:

"You need it more than I."

At the celebration to which I just referred, it was noticeable that this fine old leader was now becoming very feeble,



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THE UNVEILING OF DR. JOHNSON'S TOMB

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### THE HISTORY OF UNION AT A GLANCE

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- 1852—April 22, Sunday School organized.  
May 10, The Union Baptist Church organized by Rev. John Carey.  
October, Joined the Maryland Union Association.
- 1853—Church began buying
- 1855—The Church incorporated.  
Rev. John Carey resigned.
- 1856—Rev. Chauncey Leonard called as pastor.
- 1858—Rev. Chauncey Leonard resigned.
- 1861—The Church called Rev. Wm. William as her pastor.
- 1866—Saratoga St. congregation disbands and joins the Union.
- 1868—The Church purchased the Disciples' Meeting House on North Street, and moved there.
- 1869—Church ordained and called Rev. Wm. P. Thompson as her minister.
- 1869—Rev. William Williams died suddenly.
- 1872—January, Rev. Thompson died.  
October, Church called Rev. Harvey Johnson.
- 1874—Church declared itself "self-supporting."  
Macedonia Church set a part as Union's first mission-child.
- 1876—January, New edifice dedicated, having cost more than \$20,000.
- 1879—Great Missionary expansion program launched wherein over ten missions and churches resulted, in the city and counties.
- 1892—The Union, because of discrimination withdrew from Maryland Union Association.
- 1897—Union, through Dr. Johnson, established the Colored Baptist Convention.
- 1902—The Semi-Centennial Celebration of the Church held.
- 1904—Sold the North St. edifice and worshipped temporarily in the Nazarites' Hall while the present edifice was being built.
- 1905—December, the present building dedicated, having cost over \$50,000.
- 1921—Land about the Church purchased for \$6,500.
- 1922—November, Celebration of Dr. Johnson's 50 years as Minister.
- 1923—January, Dr. Harvey Johnson passed.
- 1924—Dr. David E. Over called as pastor.
- 1925—Dr. Johnson's Tomb unveiled.
- 1926—The Parsonage purchased.
- 1928—Dr. Over's services terminated.
- 1929—Rev. J. T. Boddie called as pastor.
- 1939—Rev. Boddie resigned.
- 1940—The Church called Dr. Baxter L. Matthews.  
The Church purchased the building next door to develop as a Parish House.
- "The Lord has done great things for us, whereof we are glad."